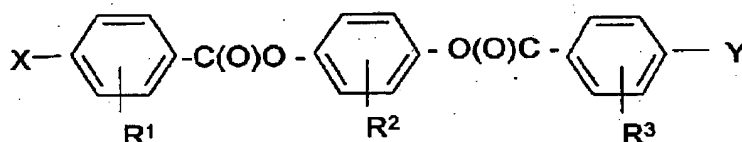


**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please delete the paragraph appearing under "Abstract of the Invention" at p. 59 of the specification, and insert the following amended paragraph:

A method for producing a blend comprising randomly substituted mesogens comprising: providing one or more platform molecules have the following general structure:



wherein at least one member selected from the group consisting of X and Y comprises one or more spacer groups; R<sup>2</sup> is a bulky organic group whereby, when both X and Y are reacted with polymerizable groups to produce polymerizable mesogens, R<sup>2</sup> provides sufficient steric hindrance to achieve a nematic state at room temperature while suppressing crystallinity of the polymerizable mesogens at room temperature; and, R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are selected from groups less bulky than R<sup>2</sup>; and independently substituting at least one member selected from the group consisting of X and Y with a polymerizable group, thereby producing a blend of randomly substituted mesogens.